

TREK 1 EVEREST DETAILS

Key - BC = Base Camp; IC = Intermediate Camp; ABC = Advanced Base Camp

[22/04/03-23/04/03 \(Elaine Holmes\)](#)

Well the day had arrived - 0820 bags packed and off to the airport, but it wasn't until I saw everyone gathered at Heathrow that it really hit home - we were off to Everest!



Everest

Everyone checked in and I wondered how this was going to compare to how we'd all feel on our return - when we'd probably be a few pounds lighter (bonus!) (a popular female thought), have sore feet and limbs but hopefully lots of fantastic memories and an experience to treasure.

The journey out was quite tiring, with a 7 hour flight from Heathrow to Dubai, including a stop which saw us literally get off the plane, onto a terminal bus, walk through the terminal and then to the Departure Gate, ready for boarding! (But it was good to stretch the legs and to see Dan wearing socks and sandals!).

We then had 2 more flights. The last one taking 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours, but unlike the first two, there were no spare seats and to say space was at a premium, was no exaggeration.

So much so that the plane became "too full" and as a result 9 of us didn't receive our luggage in Kathmandu. (This was a good induction to travelling light!).

We were all then welcomed with a garland of flowers placed around our necks (much to the



Balcony view from the guesthouse

delight of the guys) before boarding our minibus to the Guesthouse.

On arrival at the guesthouse we all checked in to our rooms which appeared to differ slightly in standard - Dave and Pete (C) seemingly occupying the 'Bridal Suite'!

At 2030 we went with Bhanu (our guide) to Rum Doodles restaurant and enjoyed a meal.

Jet-lag, tiredness in combination with beer and caffeine lead to a few stories on RMs' way of life... The meal ended with Pete (C)'s party piece - a lighted toothpick perched on top of his head!

Walking down the dark alleyways and avoiding being mowed down by the local traffic (mainly rickshaws), we piled into a local Irish Bar! It was around 0100 when the first of us left, only to find the gates of the guesthouse entrance locked. A security guard then opened a 'Hamster cage' styled door and we crawled through - finally reaching our rooms where we'd be staying for 3 nights before starting our journey.

[24/04/03 \(Elaine Holmes\)](#)

0930 we enjoyed breakfast outside. A few heavy heads and blurry eyes were visible and the tale of Pete (T's) knowledge of a 'Dirty Dutch girl' was revealed!

[24/04/03 Cont...\(Alison Dewynter\)](#)

Kathmandu Guesthouse has gates that lock at night and a guard. It's a haven from the city where the sounds, sites and smells can overwhelm you. It is an alphabet of colour and noise with no let up- air heavy and cloying; beggars with round copper bowls and babies that cry for money; cars careering over choppy concrete streets; dirt and dust; elephants of stone or metal; foreigners; flowers; gore-tex; hooters continually sounding; heat; incense; joss sticks; japonica; kit shops everywhere; lamas; mo-mo's; monkeys; mangoes; noise; noise and more noise; oranges; odours; poverty seen through open doors; quiet somewhere; rupees; rice; sun; seat; silk; smoke; spitting; traffic; umbrellas (according to Pete); vehicles; water dirty and clean; xylophones (I'm making it up); yaks and Zen Buddhists.

After breakfast and briefings we all ventured out into town returning with various items. Postcards were popular, although the writing of them is not.

At 1500 news came through that our remaining baggage had arrived at the airport. The sign by the baggage carousel had said, "Wait here for baggage reconciliation". I was looking forward to being reconciled with the green medical trunk complete with Red Cross that conjures up images of Hawkeye, Radar, Clinger and Hot Lips Hoolihan.

Did my duty by prescribing brufen and tubigrip.

The bus trip to the airport revealed scenes of Nepalese life: men carrying wardrobes on their heads; knife grinders; buildings held up by pieces of string; Dan wearing socks with his sandals.



Sitting on the floor with shoes off

At the dinner that followed we were served black lentils and egg curry with rice, along with vegetable and bacon curry and some other curries!

Al Hinks arrived and spun various stories until we were politely asked to go home. Reluctant to end the day, most of us went for a final beer at the Irish Pub. By then it was tomorrow.....

All luggage was loaded onto the minibus and the boot held shut with a small wooden wedge.

1915 muster for bus trip to Nepalese restaurant. Arrive, shoes off then upstairs where we sat on the floor around low tables. We were served with small terracotta dishes of clear liqueur along with Nepalese snacks.



Entertainment Nepalese Style

25/04/03 (Lee Broster)

The day started somewhat earlier than yesterday with most of the team up, ready and breakfasted before 1000. Once again it was very hot, however that didn't stop Dan and Nick completing a brisk walk before breakfast.

The team split up for most of the day with a number of groups splintering off to tour different places. One group went on a tour with a



Entrance to the Monkey Temple

that can be looked up in most reputable guidebooks. The temple is a 3km walk to the West of the city through some character full Kathmandu streets and over a particularly interesting river. A short way into the walk, the Temple was easy to spot as it is built on a hill 77m above the city.

As we climbed the steep steps to the temple, several members of the group (not including me) were heard to exclaim, "this reminds me of the time when Dan wore socks with his sandals". At this point it is necessary to say that I am travelling on a bus - and I'm not semi-illiterate.

guide, of more than enough, but nowhere near all of the Temples. They went to see the Princess in the Palace - unfortunately out, but had a more successful visit to the 'Bell Inn'!

Another group (including me) had a relaxing, but short period at the Hotel writing post cards. We then set off to the 'Monkey Temple', which does also have a very long traditional name



Prayer Flags adorn the top



The Monkey Temple

window wearing just an 'elephant tea-cosy' on her head, ok and a sports bra! They have now recovered.

For the evening meal we split into our teams of 6 and inevitably all ended up at "Fire and Ice" together. This proved to be an excellent 'Last Supper' of Pizza before the adventure that brought us all here began tomorrow.

[26/04/03 \(Rob Yendle\)](#)

At last on our way, early breakfast and then on the bus for our 3 hour or was it 5 hour journey to the border.

Weather and the scenery were great and had several stops along the way, the first being "Nobby's emergency bladder drills"!

Next few stops we had drinks and then lunch just before crossing the Friendship Bridge. Spent about an hour there before racing out into the rain.

We finally cleared customs but had some snags on the immigration side, Dan said it was because it was 6pm and the border was now closed. But we all saw them take him to one side and warn him about his dress

The temple commanded excellent views of the city and was, in its own right, an interesting place to visit.

On returning from the walk a significant portion of the group were surprised and shocked to glance up from their civilised afternoon tea, to be confronted with the spectacle of Alison dancing around in front of her



One of the 'locals' at the Monkey Temple

sense, stating that socks with sandals were not appropriate and he was not to darken the border again in that rig!

So we end up in a cosy Tibetan Guesthouse savouring the local delight of Yak, noodles and curry.

We all pray the "shoe fairy" will visit Dan and leave him a present for the morning!

[27/04/03 \(Tony Tsang\)](#)

Up at 0730 and breakfast at 0800. A lot of the team had caught up on a good night's sleep, me included.

Breakfast was not bad, fried egg, hash brown things, what looked like pitta bread, pancake and tea. 0900 and straight back to the Chinese checkpoint (which was only down the road). The checkpoint process was relatively trouble free, though took a while, as we had to wait for our Sirdar (head Sherpa) to get our Tibet Visas.

Approx 1100 we boarded our Landcruisers and were off. Along narrow roads and many hairpin bends, often I would look out of the window and I swear our tyres were inches away from sheer drops, easily hundreds of feet down. The scenery was spectacular, vast canyons and valleys, like nothing you've ever seen before (well perhaps on TV!).



Travelling in the Landcruisers

of the locals had had an argument leaving the English tourists bewildered. In the end, one of the

Among one of the stranger things I have seen was when we encountered a parked land cruiser, not from our group. Naturally we all halted to see if we could be of assistance. Two



locals was booted out, bag and everything. The two English ladies and the driver re-boarded the cruiser and were off!



Setting up camp

Arriving just outside Nylam between 1330-1400 we set up camp, had dinner, then prepared to climb the peak we were camped next to. We set off not long after 1500. It wasn't long before we were all out of breath (me especially) due to the altitude. I was advised by several experienced members of the group to take VERY short and laboured steps. This advice proved to be very

useful.

We reached a tall spire of rocks, where we had our final rest and photo opportunity before descending back to camp. We had reached



A photo opportunity before descending back to camp

over 4000 metres. The descent was short but it seemed like a lifetime before we arrived back at camp. Though near the back, I was in time to see two of our ladies racing towards the temporary toilets!

After a hearty supper, we were told that tomorrow we would ascend higher by land cruiser and go for another walk!

28/04/03 (Pete Sellers)

The day started for most people around 2am with a run round the campsite in their undies for a pee. For those who were still asleep, Pete Curly did rounds to wake them up whilst trying to find his tent!

At 7am we were woken with cups of tea and bowls of water in our tents. For most, this was a pleasant surprise and a good start to the day. For the Officers, it was totally expected.

After a good breakfast of porridge and a demonstration of how to take tents down for the MLs (including the toilet tent with Elaine in it!), we set off on a 5 hour drive across amazing Tibetan landscape, which is incredibly barren but supports lots of Tibet villages (which looked unchanged since Medieval times).



Typical Tibetan Landscape

At the lunch stop we were surrounded with Tibetan children.

The bumpy journey continued for a while longer just to prove the brakes were dodgy. The campsite at Tingri is at the edge of a wide plain and the promised view of Mt Everest appeared at scran time in the evening. After a hasty lunch and with full stomachs Dan led us up a nearby hill on another acclimatisation walk which whilst many got headaches was definitely worthwhile (I promised to say). Back at BC the



Acclimatisation walk



Just before the headaches began!

wind had picked up and several felt ill, but were looking forward to the pizza for supper, which turned out to be noodles. Some then went to the Hot Springs for a bath; some stayed in the mess tent and had a late supper of babies.

29/04/03 (Pete Trill)

Early morning, and I have to force myself up (no change there then). Some people are not so well today with the altitude, me included. Unfortunately Rob was very unwell in the night and left us to go back to Kathmandu this morning, a friendly and sociable chap and we are all looking forward to seeing him when we get back.

We stood waiting for a while before we set off as Dan was deciding what socks to wear today - not every colour goes with His sandals you know! None of us minded though as the Tibetan landscape is so spectacular - you have to see it to believe it.

Back to breakfast, damn, I looove Tibetan porridge!!! Mmm mmm mmm.

We had a short stroll then the Landcruisers picked us up again. We gained considerable height by driving again - not so sure if this is a good thing.



Spectacular Tibetan landscape

Started taking Diamox for the first time today, hoping to see an improvement, not so sure about the pink flying Yaks I'm seeing! At this point I feel I need to point out that I am illiterate and if I do actually manage to spell something correctly then it's a fluke.

Arrived at another expertly set out camp by the Sherpas who are excellent - most of the group went for a walk, I stopped to stay in my tent and tried to sleep. Din dins as always was good - the chef's a top man. Saw some more of the locals today in the morning before we set off. I'm impressed by the colours of their clothes etc. They can be very charming people.



Colourful clothes

Bit of snow just now; think I might make a snowwoman.

Passed my bedtime now, so night night.

30/04/03 (Nick Blackman)

The Sherpas roused us all about 0730 (Tibet time) with that, now expected, hot tea and basin of washing water. It was our coldest morning (-2 degrees C in the tent) and icy outside. By now the team is 'in the groove' and we were all packed/breakfasted by 0930. Unfortunately Dan wasn't happy with his selection of socks and so unpacked and changed to get a better colour match! Alison took this opportunity to run a 'clinic' to check everyone over for pulse, chest and co-ordination (looking for signs of AMS). This evolution wasn't complete until 1100 hours - we whiled away the time chatting and dishing out chocolate to a teenage herdsman. Goodness knows where she slept - it was -4 degrees C or lower outside and her clothes were pitiful. She was miles from the nearest village and must have been tending the Yak herd further up the valley.

Our plan for the day was to drive in the Landcruisers up to the height of yesterday's acclimatisation walk (i.e. 4900m) and then trek part of the way to Rongbuk. This would give us some high-altitude walking and cut a day from the itinerary, thereby giving us an extra day at Everest BC.

We debased a few miles up the valley from Lung and commenced a steady ascent over the first ridge. The weather was fair, with good



A Yak Herd

views on either side of the valley, but the skies were looking ominous. We traversed this 5040m ridge, descended 200m into a valley past a herd of yaks and then ascended to 5075m to rendezvous with the land cruisers. Pete (T) and Elaine sensibly decided to quit at this stage and the rest pressed on in deteriorating weather. By the time we made the next RV at 1500, we had covered 10 km

(mostly above 5000m) and the last hour was in strong winds and light snow/hail. Most were feeling fairly rough and poor Elaine the worst who was suffering from an evil headache.

We headed off by land cruiser for half an hour before reaching a (relatively new) concrete bridge over a glacial river. After a bit of a debate, it was agreed the whole convoy would have an 'operational pause' here for lunch, rest and sunbathe (it was still chilly but the riverbank was



The Rongbuk Monastery

bathed in a warming sun). Elaine and Pete (T) still felt rotten when we set off at 1600 and all were relieved when the (famous) Rongbuk Monastery finally came into view. As we passed the monastery we were spellbound by the simply epic view of Everest at the southern end of the valley - now very close.



Clouds initially obscured the view



Once the clouds lifted the North Ridge became clearly visible

As usual, the Sherpas had already set up the camp (5025m) and after tea the team bomb-burst to look round the monastery and take photographs of the mountain. Initially Everest was almost totally obscured by cloud, though fleeting glimpses of the North Ridge gave away the magnitude of the mountain. Within 45 mins of arriving however, the mountain was basking in evening sunlight and (collectively) we took hundreds of photos as the clouds cleared and the sun set.

By the time supper was over, an icy wind was blasting down the valley and most of us went for a final visit and took refuge in tents.

[01/05/03 \(Mark Lintott\)](#)

Today has been a fantastic day - this day alone has made the whole thing worthwhile.

It started as usual with a cuppa from the Sherpas but today, instead of drinking it in our tents we all stood around gaping at the awesome North Face of Everest as it became baked in sunlight.



Everest under a clear blue sky

Following breakfast we set off towards BC under a clear blue sky. It was a steady 8k trek with the most awesome view of Everest still 20-30k distant. It's easy to appreciate this view as a trekker, but potential

summiteers on the main expedition must have viewed it differently - gulp!

We approached BC. Fortunately we then passed through a barrier and were allowed to camp with the main climb team - collocated with the main exped.

Had a very interesting brief from Lt Col Nick Arding and discussed the next few days. We all feel very privileged to be here.

Rest day tomorrow then hopefully to IC the following day.

A few are suffering from this awful AMS and most of us have experienced it in one form or another. Most of us are acclimatising ok considering the speed with which we've reached

this altitude. Personally I feel fine until I move too fast, then I feel terrible. A few trek members get me down when they're running around like they're at sea level.

For me a symptom of altitude has been vivid dreams - last nights was of particular note. The dream started very promising - including Alison and Elaine - Fantastic! Early into the dream Alison insists on wearing what looks like a swan shaped tea cosy on her head, which was ok, but then Dan turned up wearing nothing but sandals and white socks! Fortunately I woke up at this point to my nightly thumping headache and bladder the size of Bournemouth.

Addendum

Had our blood/oxygen levels tested by a dubious machine, I have slightly more O2 absorbed in my haemoglobin than the chain smoking Shuggy who toasts the lowest level of the trek.

[02/05/03 \(Dave Reskelly\)](#)



The Main Climbs' camp site

Today was our first rest day, so we had tea at 0630 and breakfast at 0700; Pete Curley opted for a late one at 0745! The morning turned out to be fantastic - a light breeze and glorious sunshine, so the majority of people did some washing whilst others read or lazed in the sun.



At the Irvine and Mallory Memorial



In the background - some of the teams attempting to reach the summit including the RN/RM team and Trek 1 (far right)

At 1100 Fi Shepherd (main team PR manager) took us all on a very informative and interesting tour of BC and its present occupants. We saw memorials to Boardman and Tasker and had a group phot taken around the memorial to Irvine and Mallory. She

pointed out all the other large and small teams hoping to reach the summit. After a brief look at the shantytown style shopping centre, we wandered back to our site for lunch, which was as usual a culinary delight from our wonderful Sherpa.

The afternoon was chilled, some played cards whilst others slept or read. Andy Brown (main team doctor) briefed us on the medical impacts of the trek to IC and its potential effects on the main climbing party if one of us was to suffer AMS on the way up.

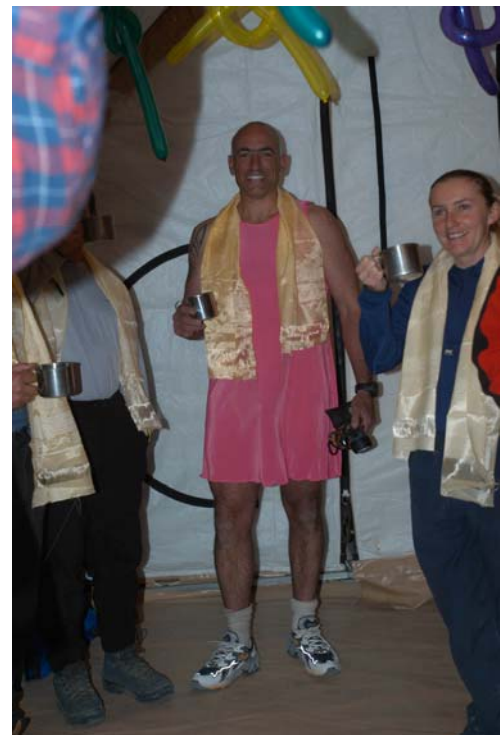


Welcome/Wedding celebrations

Brown and Alison Dewynter had been married early this morning beneath the 'Prayer Flags' by a Lama - apparently a religious person and not the animal! Seizing the opportunity Pete Curley appeared in a pink dress (which unbeknown to me he had been hiding in our tent!), making a wonderful Bridesmaid/Maid of Honour! The rum and beer flowed and all congratulated the happy couple. Then we all slowly disappeared off to bed with thoughts of the hard ascent to IC tomorrow.

03/05/03 (Derek Scott)

The whole trek was invited to the main teams' tent for a 'buffet evening meal' to officially welcome us to Everest BC. The team had gone to great efforts to make us feel welcome with balloons, Bombay mix, nibbles and beer/coke. Team Leader Nick Arding announced that Andy



Pretty in pink!

After much discussion about previous treks, AMS and acclimatisation profiles, it was decided that the safest and more realistic option would be to abandon any attempt on ABC and instead set our sights on IC.

But before all that, all potential models had a chance to show what they were made of at an early morning photo shoot in



Group photo shoot with the Sherpas

front of the big hill called Everest. Fi Shepherd actually suggested that I had a sporting chance modelling shoes for Kays Catalogue - I appreciated her comments.



**Dan & Tony with ensign from
HMS GLASGOW**

So, 12 of us set off on the long slog to IC and it wasn't long before we were down to 11. In fact, after about 20 mins the party split up into a fast and 'not-so fast' group. The track was good and the incline gentle - the views of Everest improving each step. After about an hour, the distinctive features of Pumori



Off to Intermediate Camp (IC)

came into view. It's not the highest mountain in the world (obviously!) but a difficult one to climb and a pretty one to boot! Things were about to change though, as the track veered off to the left and began to slope upwards! - what's that all about? We were worried though and it wasn't long before we were all gasping for air after only a few steps. It was hard work and what made it worse was the fact that the pleasant distractions of Everest and Pumori were disappearing from view - fast!

More hard work and it wasn't long before we arrived at the 'Half-way Tent' - a refuge for Yak herdsman. A guide breather here before heading upwards - again! Although much of the time was spent with heads down and breathing out of one's bottom, it was hard to ignore the

spectacular and unusual scenery in which we were walking. Great tongues of ice hanging from the sides of the valley and unusual rock formations accompanied us all the way to IC.

Eventually we arrived, and what a sight for sore eyes! We were greeted by members of the main climb team and ushered inside the mess-tent for well-deserved cups of tea and biscuits. Being part of the quicker group, I had chance to down at least 12 cups of tea before the slowcoaches arrived an hour later. After more cups of tea, soup and nibbles, it was time for tent allocation before some members of the team fell asleep at the table.

After dinner, it was down to cards with the Trek 1 card-school and some invited guests. Once again I turned out to be an outstanding blackjack champion, excelling in the art of 'non-emotional' victory! Being great at cards is only good for so long - it can get boring! So as I retired as champ, everyone else threw in the towel and decided it was time to hit the sack - thank God!

[04/05/03 \(Zoë Hambley\)](#)

With the first main long slog behind us and another but shorter one to follow we had another day on the famous hill or so we thought!

During the night the winds had picked up and there was a light layer of snow everywhere.

By 0800 our plans had already changed and the Sirdar refused to go any higher. The weather forecast for the day was not good and it was going to get worse; winds were to be at 80mph!

So instead of going to our target height of 6000m, the main team offered to take us up onto the ridge where the summit can be seen with ice penitons all the way along the ridge. Here we would get some brilliant photos.

Up on the ridge and the wind was blowing a hooley but the view was amazing! The tow combined was enough to take your breath away.

After about 20mins with everyone was frozen to death we climbed back down to IC for our final cup of tea, before our final descent to BC.

The walk back down was horrendous in the wind, it was freezing! There were times when a few of us were nearly knocked over with the

force. That is when Dan's poles came in handy to secure me to the ground!

Arriving at the halfway point the main team who were at IC, came bombing down the hill only to say that the weather was due to get worse and they were abandoning camp due to the winds. We then left them to it and we went on our way. We were making good time; everyone was cold and just wanted to get back down.

The second half just passed by and there was BC in sight. After a bit of a speed march amongst the boulders, we were all back at camp having lunch. What an achievement. Everyone was so pleased and chuffed. What a way to finish a brilliant 2 weeks!

Everyone then retired for a few hours, we were all shattered.



Time for more food!

Evening meal came around too quickly; there we were yet again eating more food!

As it was our final night at BC, we all went round to see the main team for a final sociable evening. A nice chilled night but one by one we slowly disappeared to bed. An early start tomorrow!

05/05/03 (Neil Clark)

Awakened at 0530 for bed tea then packed and minced about until 0700ish for breakfast. The reason for such an early start was due to the Chinese Authorities being tipped off reference the location and attire of a certain member of our party. The choice was to either pay a visit under amnesty rules to the local sock shop or leave the country -so off we all went!

After final photos by Fi Shepherd with some hill in the background, we set off on our journey to Nylam - due to take some 9 hrs.

The main climb team and support staff were up to wave us off - well some were anyway - others continuing with their rest training.

We were both glad and sad to be leaving - it has been a privilege to have had the opportunity to talk with and listen to the plans of the people hoping to get to the top of the world. On the other hand we have gone up as far as we could and it will be nice to start the process of going home with a night out in Kathmandu. With the freezing temperatures and biting winds it was an incentive to get into our trusty Landcruisers.

We left BC with our first main stop to be Tingri Hot Springs some 5 hrs away. The journey was uneventful in the main but to be surrounded by such stark scenery is awesome - incredible how people survive here.

Going towards the springs, we had to stop every so often as the winds picked up the dust and dumped it right in front of the vehicles, making it interesting for us, although the driver didn't seem too concerned.



The Bull Fight!

We stopped in the local Tibetan 'Wild West Mexican tumble weed' type place - Tingri - half expecting a gunfight or two. We did see loads of mangy cows fighting over a cardboard box, with horses and carts packed full of people - just like Scotland!

We all looked forward to the hot springs after over a week of wearing as many layers of clothing as possible - it was time to get as close to naked as possible without making ourselves sick. We were delighted to see the pool covered in some sort of green slime-like substance or was that after we came out?

Appearance notwithstanding, most of us went in and it was well worth it, especially when beer and Sprite appeared and we had nice cold beers in our hands, sludge between toes in a roasting hot pool and the wind doing cartwheels over our heads.

A few hours later we ended up back in Nylam feeling more acclimatised than 10 days prior and settled down for our last camp in Tibet and the whole trip. We may have made the mistake of giving the

drivers some beer before tomorrow's hairpin bends, so there may not be an entry tomorrow!

That's enough drive for one night - it's been splendid in Tibet and I've certainly been impressed with the friendliness of the people while they have very little. Bye from Tibet.

06/05/03 (Pete Curley)

It seems as we get more and more acclimatised and then descend, we have to get up earlier and earlier! And seeing as the card school has expanded, we go to bed later and later.

The drivers weren't as noisy this morning going about their business - it's amazing the stunning effects a couple of beers have!

Luckily the journey wasn't as long and boring as yesterday. We just about left our campsite when our driver was weaving around boulders on the road from a recent rock fall. The rest of the journey was uneventful, depending on how you feel about looking out of a side window as the wheels of the motor shed gravel over a precipice!

It only took an hour and a half to get to Zhangmu where little men in white coats quickly halted progress doing a SARS check. While one of the little men sprayed the door handles of the Landcruisers (a couple of them anyway!), another was checking everyone's temperatures. This set alarm bells ringing as Dave Reskelly has had a temperature at about 40 or 50 ever since he found out he was sharing a tent with me! Formalities out of the way and off we went again to the customs office for some more!

A look around yet another shop for 20 mins then back to the immigration window for a surprisingly quick turnaround and through the other side of the border. Back on the Landcruisers for the final descent to the 'Friendship Bridge' for the final crossing into Nepal.

I thought we got away with only buying a single entry visa but it was back into the friendly local café where we waited for immigration to sort us out. More form filling and waiting around, always a downside to this trip. As everyone is used to it, it has become less of a chore. Anyway, everyone is looking forward to a good night out tonight.

Oh and Dan took his socks off to cross the bridge in JUST his sandals; sorry mate the damage is done!

The drive through Nepal back to Kathmandu was green and pleasant, if a little hairy, as it was mainly downhill on mountain roads most of the way. Once back at the guesthouse, everyone scattered for their individual admin, to prepare themselves for an early start and more importantly the last run ashore.

We all met for a drink and to give Dan a smally gift for all his hard work. I say all, but Alison and Elaine thought they had time for a hair appt in the hotel salon, but they didn't! Then it was off to Rum Doodles for a slap up meal, which was excellent. Absolutely stuffed at the end of it, so it was off to Tom and Jerry's for some drinks.

The main team lads recommended the place and it turned out to be a kicking pub. For a while! After a couple of games of pool and the place starting to empty, it was time for a boogie.

Off to the local "discotheque" where everyone had a "bit of a dance". I recall getting a bit sweaty. Luckily we didn't have to get up early (it turned out we didn't have to meet till 1300!), so we staggered out at fourish and made our way back to the hotel. Tony worried a few people as he was nowhere to be seen (he said something about Israelis!), but he turned up and we all safely went to bed.

[07/05/03 \(Belinda Fear\)](#)

A somewhat shaky start to the day for most, after a well earned social yesterday. Our best lie in of the trip so far and probably a good job. Some made it to breakfast, others didn't, some looking not too dissimilar to when they went out last night! Once again time for a bit of last minute shopping and sorting money and things out, another glorious hot day. Everyone had emerged by 1300 when we met with our luggage ready for our departure. One last tourist shot of us as a group outside the hotel and we were off to get our bus to the airport. The start of our long journey back to the UK.

On arrival, check-in went fairly smoothly and before we knew it, we were airborne and on our way to Dhaka - in a much more modern aircraft than when we flew in. A hamster sized snack was served just as Dan

pointed out there was a last glimpse of the top of Everest sticking up above the clouds from the back of the aircraft, our farewell view.

Before we knew it the dreaded 8 hr wait at Dhaka airport was upon us, but not this time, shortly after our passports were taken off us, it was announced we were off to a hotel. The Sheraton we thought.....how wrong - we were instead taken to the Atlantic Bay instead (4 in Bangladesh terms, $\frac{1}{2}$ * in UK terms!). The bus ride there was rather hair raising and put the 'Wacky Races' to shame - I think we all arrived with white knuckles!*

For a while we all wondered what we were doing there and the hotel didn't seem prepared, but they laced on some nice food, we had rooms for a snooze and managed a shower before heading back to the airport at 2330 for the fun to begin.

No sooner had we arrived, passport and ticket less, the guy who was escorting us seemed to disappear and we were left a little bemused. Not for long though as our tickets arrived and we collected passports to once again take a pew in that all too familiar departure lounge. Boy, were we all glad to take Dan's advice and wear sandals (this time no socks) as it was roasting.

More waiting, bag searches and x-ray machines and once again we were airborne and on our way to Dubai, on a very full aircraft!

08/05/03 (Mally Malpass & Shuggy McGleish (respectively))

No free seats to lounge on this time - a full plane and the kids have started crying (pass me the ear defs!).

Food arrived, you guessed it - curry on curry with or without meat and that was about it. I woke in Dubai, off the plane for a leg stretch and back to civilisation at last, if only for half an hour. A quick look around the cheap electrical goods, but no time to buy anything and up to the coffee shop where Belinda and Zoë were keeping their chocolate levels high. No time to spare and we are back on the plane, more prayers and off we were on the last leg to London - England's green and pleasant lands.

Oh I forgot, Dan's still got his socks off!

[08/05/03 Cont....](#)

Fell asleep in Dubai, woke up in England, stretched, scratched and went to get the luggage.

After spending so much time with each other, it's always a bit weird when at the end of the trip everybody does a bomb-burst amid smiles, handshakes and party promises. One last word from Dan (nobody takes it very seriously, because he's not wearing his socks of power!), and the trip is over. One thing is for sure, we've all had a great time.



So as everybody disappears one by one to their respective modes of transport home, I think I'll just take a few moments to remember the trip, the people, the mountain, the bad dress sense, roll a tickler, sit on my rucksack and for a wee bit, slip off to Tibet again!

Remembering the people of Tibet

